

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respond herein to the Office Action dated February 22, 2007.

Applicants' attorneys appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

Claims 13 and 14 are canceled as previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-12 have been rejected in the Office Action. Applicants canceled Claims 4 and 10, amended Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 12, added new Claims 15 and 16 and respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 1-3, 5-9 and 11-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,666,987 to Combs ("Combs"). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Independent Claims 1 and 7, as amended, recite a surface treatment apparatus including a pressure vessel having a processing chamber, a mixing section supplying a process fluid under pressure to the pressure vessel, a high-pressure fluid supply section supplying a high-pressure fluid component of the process fluid to the mixing section, and a chemical-agent supply section preparing a pressurized chemical formulation component of the process fluid by blending together selected chemical agents and pumping the pressurized chemical formulation into the mixing section. The pressurized chemical formulation and the pressurized high-pressure liquid are mixed in the mixing section prior to being supplied to the processing chamber. The above limitations are not disclosed by the prior art of record.

Combs discloses a chemical dispersing apparatus including a container 8 into which chemicals may be supplied through a nozzle 11. However, chemicals supplied through nozzle 11 are not supplied into the container under pressure. Instead, they are simply "added" or "introduced" into the vessel. *See*, column 6, lines 46-53. The pressurized liquid is separately introduced into the container through an inlet nozzle 6.

Combs further discloses that the outlet product vent valve 18 should be opened to allow for displacement of air or vapors as a beneficial chemical or chemicals 25 are added to vessel 8A. By contrast, the high-pressure fluid and the chemical formulation recited in the current independent claims, are mixed within the mixing section, which is kept in a constant high-pressure state.

There is no such mixing section in the device disclosed in Combs, and the pressurized liquid is mixed with the chemicals inside the processing container, not in the mixing section, as required by amended Claims 1 and 7. Accordingly, the above-discussed limitations of Claims 1 and 7 are not disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record.

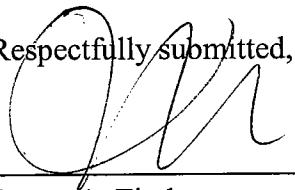
Dependent Claims 2-3, 5-6, 8-9 and 11-12 are indicated in the Summary of the Office Action as being rejected over the same Combs reference. However, the written rejection does not address the limitations recited in these claims. 37 C.F.R. §1.105 and MPEP §707.07(g) expressly discourage such piecemeal examination. It is requested that any future Office Action indicate the allowability of any claim that recites a limitation against which no prior art is cited.

Claims 2-3, 5-6, 8-9, 11-12 and 15-16 depend directly or indirectly from the above discussed independent Claims 1 and 7 and are, therefore, allowable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the respective independent claims.

In view of the above, it is submitted that all claims in this application are now in condition for allowance, prompt notification of which is requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present Amendment or wish to discuss the application generally, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING
SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY
THROUGH THE PATENT AND
TRADEMARK OFFICE EFS FILING
SYSTEM ON June 22, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,


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